



CSEA

Center for Southeast Asians



**ANNUAL ACHIEVEMENT REPORT
OCTOBER 1, 2024 - SEPTEMBER 30TH, 2025**

Prepared by
Channavy Chhay

About Us

Family, social and educational services for the community

MISSION

The mission of the Center for Southeast Asians (CSEA) is to promote the prosperity, heritage and leadership of Southeast Asians in Rhode Island

VISION

Southeast Asians are active participants in the social, civic, and political life of Rhode Island. Our generations work together to preserve the traditions and culture of Southeast Asians, plan for the future, achieve economic prosperity and ultimately enrich our communities.

The Center for Southeast Asians is a welcoming, vibrant and trusted resource for the advancement of the Southeast Asian community. We foster the knowledge and skills necessary to be the leaders of today and tomorrow. We promote cultural diversity, understanding, and preservation.

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- We are united and grounded by our history and rich traditions and cultures.
- We are committed to the success of our clients, helping them to move ahead. As such, we provide our clients with the skills and knowledge necessary to be self sufficient and advocates for their own needs.
- We hold the highest standards for performance and integrity.
- We are accountable to our community to produce results.
- We value collaboration and build partnerships to advance our programs and services.





This report highlights the Center for Southeast Asians' (CSEA's) achievements during the 2024-2025 fiscal year from October 1st, 2024 through September 30th, 2025. In addition to continuing to deliver services to the community through its established programs, during the reporting period CSEA developed several new programs, which are described in more detail in subsequent sections of this report:

- **Casey Family Programs- Family Enrichment Center Development**
- **RI Real Jobs- Nail Salon Technician Program**
- **Behavioral Health Partnership with Gateway Healthcare**
- **Culturally Specific Behavioral Health Services**
- **Community Health Worker Program**
- **Anti-Asian Hate Initiative**
- **Community Gardening Program**

Year in Review by the Numbers

In FY 2025, CSEA delivered critical programs to more than 5,000 Rhode Islanders

- **50,000 pounds of food given to over 3000 families**
- **1,431 community health services provided**
- **2,104 meals delivered to elders**
- **6,929 SNAP outreach contacts**
- **60 small businesses supported**
- **\$30,000 in microloans issued**
- **1,000 tax returns prepared**
- **152 adult learners served**



"CSEA changed my life. I always feel comfortable coming here because they understand me, speak my language, and help me with everything I need like housing, benefits, and support. I am happy CSEA helped me learn to smile and be happy again. "



CSEA Small Biz Program

CSEA is a leader in supporting minority-owned businesses in the community through a wide range of services. Small businesses are at the heart of Rhode Island's economy and are the driving force of the State's economic growth. We provided technical assistance and helped clients who without support could not participate and contribute to the State's economic prosperity. We assisted clients in navigating grant applications while offering consultation services focused on brand identity and social media marketing. In addition, we help clients build a vision for their business with strategic business development, planning, and innovation.

CSEA provided vital support to over 60 small businesses throughout 2024. In the first quarter of 2025, CSEA released \$30,000 in microloans. We awarded 6 businesses with \$5,000 each in microloans. These business owners had challenges in operating their businesses. One of the owners had flooding in their building where they are renting. Another needed some extra money to expand their offerings for upcoming farmer's markets where they like to sell their products. Through the generous support of private foundations like Papitto Opportunity Connection, CSEA is able to provide support for many small local businesses in development, infrastructure, and employment. This support not only benefits the businesses and its employees themselves, but also offers quality goods and services for the entire community making a significant impact in the daily lives of those we serve.

This year, the Center for Southeast Asians also proudly continued our partnership with Business Empowerment Alliance of Rhode Island (BEARI) to uplift Rhode Island's diverse small business community. Through our technical assistance programs, we've helped entrepreneurs strengthen operations, improve capacity, and navigate the challenges of running a business. We also supported businesses in seeking capital opportunities connecting them with trusted lenders, partners, and funding networks to fuel their growth. A major highlight of the year was helping to hosting the BEARI Pitch Contest, where local small business owners showcased their ideas and competed for funding and visibility. The contest not only provided access to capital, but also celebrated the resilience, creativity, and cultural richness of our community's entrepreneurs. Together with BEARI, we remain committed to advancing economic empowerment and building a more inclusive small business ecosystem across Rhode Island.



Papitto Opportunity Connection

CSEA acquires historic building to expand services



In November 2024, the historic Temple Beth El property on Broad Street in Providence was donated to the Center for Southeast Asians by Carolyn Rafaelian, the founder and former CEO of the Alex and Ani jewelry company. At the donation ceremony she stated, “I am so pleased to donate this unique building to such an important project, and to the Center for Southeast Asians, an organization with a proven track record of providing needed services and improving lives.” Rehabilitating and renovating the building will be a major challenge and require the funding resources from those who want to support the vision of this building becoming a multicultural community center, preserving its architectural legacy while giving it new life as a hub for community engagement and enrichment. Plans for this ambitious endeavor includes comprehensive lifespan services such as early childhood education to senior adult day care, transitional housing, culturally informed healthcare services, as well as a space to host important community events.

Casey Family Programs- Family Enrichment Center Development

The Annie E. Casey Foundation recognizes CSEA's ability to provide the community with programs and services that enrich families lives. This year they decided to invest in it and provide funding to help CSEA develop the first Family Enrichment Center in Rhode Island! Family enrichment centers provide resources to strengthening families through various services and activities designed to build community and provide support. Programs include parenting education, healthy relationship workshops, parenting support groups, and child development classes, all aimed at increasing protective factors and improving overall family well-being. The Center is the perfect site to offer a comfortable, home-like atmosphere to foster connection, resource sharing, and a supportive trusted network for families. We are extremely excited with this new venture as our newly acquired building will offer the opportunity to expand programs and services to the families we serve.





Employment Assistance/Career Development

For those with limited education and language skills unemployment and underemployment are common struggles. This is especially true of vulnerable populations who lack English proficiency and are often limited to employment in low-paying or unreported jobs. CSEA has two RI DLT Skills Up workforce development tracks: Homemaker and Nail Salon Technician. These programs were developed and designed to link people in need of employment opportunities to licensed professions and in-demand careers with upward mobility.

In response to the high demand within our community, the Center was excited to launch a pilot program for nail technician training. Our first cohort has 11 students. We developed a strong, comprehensive curriculum covering foundational skills, including client communication, nail sanitation, and nail care. Throughout the course, students will gain valuable insights into fundamental principles and professional practices that are essential for success in the nail technician industry. Our primary goal is to create an inclusive learning opportunity for our underserved community to pursue and sustain careers as nail technicians and further their learning experience. Upon completion, students will be guided to take the RI Board Licensure Exam and obtain employment with our organization's assistance. Many nail salons are hiring licensed nail technicians. This program will help the Southeast Asians small businesses fill their open positions and help to grow their businesses.

The other workforce training program at CSEA is the Homemaker Training program. We held three cohorts of the Homemaker classes this past fiscal year, with 27 clients completing the program. Some of our Homemaker graduates obtained jobs with Ocean State Home Health Care and Independent Home Health Care. These two agencies are the largest organizations to work especially vulnerable elders in Rhode Island who lack English proficiency. The Homemaker program has helped our students better develop and improve their skills to enter the healthcare field. Our training program covers all the important and essential procedures of helping an elder client living more comfortably in their own homes. As the Southeast Asian elders age, there is more demand for them to stay living in their own homes rather than being put into a nursing home or an assisted living complex. Therefore, well trained Homemakers are needed to fill positions based in the elders' homes. Our program is helping to fill this need.



"CSEA has been supportive of my employment journey. I became unemployed after many years of work. Fortunately, not only did you begin to help me with my unemployment case, you went out of your way to get me certified in the training. I feel proud and secure to be working again."



Adult Education and Job Development Transforms lives!

Limited English proficiency can be a significant barrier to accessing educational and employment opportunities, job training, citizenship eligibility, and receiving eligible government resources or benefits. CSEA helps many people overcome these obstacles by offering free English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. For more than a decade, CSEA has offered beginner, intermediate, and advanced ESL classes to help learners of all backgrounds become proficient in the English language- transforming their lives and helping families attain self sufficiency. Our classes run in trimesters, two times a week during both day and evening hours. Our experienced teachers, Emily Lewis and Peter Kerr-Jarrett, make everyone, regardless of their proficiency level, feel welcome and confident that they will be able to succeed.

The fiscal year for the Adult Literacy program at CSEA began July 1, 2024, and ended on June 30, 2025. Spring semester of FY24/25 ended on June 26, 2025. The following data reflects outcome measurements for the entire year which included fourteen classes offered between four sessions – summer 24, fall 24, winter 25, and spring 25.

- The total number of students who met the 12.5-hour requirement at the end of the program year reached 152.
- Our post testing rate was 90%, which means that most of our students were meaningfully retained.
- Our overall EFL gain (Educational Functional Level) was 55%- (10% above required expectations).
- The EFL gain rate for students who took both a pre- and post-test was 62%.

These results were attained by our diligent efforts to continuously improve overall attendance and reach the highest performances standards.



Adult Literacy
Peter Kerr-Jarrett
& Emily Lewis



“Being able to learn to speak English has opened up opportunities in my life that I could only dream of before.”



Clinical Services- Designated Collaborating Organization

On September 21, 2022, CSEA was awarded funding from the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) to become a Designated Collaborating Organization (DCO) for the Certified Community Behavioral Health Infrastructure Grant. With this designation CSEA began planning to provide targeted, culturally-responsive and linguistically appropriate case management, counseling, peer support, and other behavioral health services to members of our community. CSEA is newly enrolled in Medicaid as a provider for behavioral health and CHW services. Seven of our staff have achieved full Rhode Island CHW certification. We began in October 2024 our formalized agreement to work with Gateway Healthcare/Brown University Health. Currently, our new EHR software system, OpenEMR, is being adapted to meet State and Federal requirements that were recently initiated and scheduled to begin October 2025. This will allow us to begin billing Medicaid for behavioral health services and support a new stream of revenue for the Center.

Victims Services

Cultural norms, patriarchal expectations, and language barriers further intensity the challenges for Southeast Asian women to reach out for help when faced with the trauma of domestic violence and sexual assault. Over the past year we have provided case management to 211 clients. 186 clients received direct services related to domestic violence/sexual assault which includes group and educational supports, applying for Victim Assistance relocation funds, obtaining restraining orders, safety planning, and obtaining emergency housing with our Victims of Crime Assistance (VOCA) program manager. The Center has seen a 60% increase in women from minority ethnic groups disclosing their struggles with domestic violence and sexual assault due to the comfort and safety our clients feel in response to our expertise in providing language-specific, culturally sensitive services



Fanta Phannavong
VOCA Program Manager, speaks
Laotian

Community Health Worker Program

Community Health Workers (CHWs) are frontline public health workers who are trusted members of the community they serve. This trusting relationship enables them to serve as a critical bridge to accessing appropriate health/social services, improving the understanding and utilization of services , and ensuring the overall quality and cultural responsiveness of service delivery. As mentioned above seven CSEA staff completed Rhode Island's Certified Community Health Worker Training Program and received full certification. CSEA's CHWs are able to develop unique rapport with the people we serve due to shared culture, community residence, shared language, and life experiences. Our new CHW program will serve an important role in enhancing the cultural and linguistic appropriateness of healthcare for all Rhode Islanders and help to counteract factors such as social exclusion, poverty, and marginalization. Our CHWs will provide vital health information and services as well as advocate to address socioeconomic and environmental factors impacting the overall health of the community as a whole. Over this reporting period our CHW's delivered 1431 services to clients in need.



Molyneat Kosal
Community Health
Worker
Speaks Khmer, Laotian,
and Thai



CSEA Meals Café Program

The Asian Café opened on May 31st, 2023. Currently the Café is held twice per month to accommodate the high demand and because of the lack of adequate space. We divide the participants into two groups. This allows elders not only enjoy nutritious foods but also enjoy socializing with each other. Instead of feeling isolated our elders enjoy fun games and invited guest speakers from other agencies to learn useful information. Their favorite activities are playing BINGO, singing and dancing to cultural music, and Holiday parties for both Halloween and Christmas. From October of 2024 through September of 2025, we served a total of 747 meals.

For those not able to attend we also have a home delivery program. During this annual reporting period, CSEA provided over 2280 nutritional meals to seniors. As part of the program, seniors receive meals five days per week accompanied by a friendly home visitor who speaks their native language. This reduces the seniors' feelings of isolation and helps ensure that their needs are met. CSEA's seniors receive culturally appropriate lunches that can be reheated and can be supplemented with ethnic foods available through our Food Pantry.



Linda Men
 Program Manager
 Speaks and writes in Khmer

Southeast Asian Elder Advancement Program

CSEA's Southeast Asian Elder Advancement Program strives to embrace the Southeast Asian culture and tradition of respecting our elders by supporting them with an array of wraparound services. The program provides our elders with family engagement support, healthy nutrition, language support, and physical activities/exercise to promote independence, community connection, and healthy living. One of the most popular aspects of the program is encouraging our elders to increase physical activity by participating in our weekly exercise program. Our program begins with a 2 mile Walk at Home by Leslie Sansone followed by Daily Qigong with Don Fiore for 20 min. This activity promotes elder socialization, improves health and well-being and helps to reduce historically high rates of chronic illness such as diabetes and arthritis.

From October 1st, 2024 - September 30st, 2025, we have had an average of 12 participants who committed and come to the Center every Thursday to exercise. We have completed a total of 53 sessions. As of the date of this report, we have served nearly 500 elders in this program since its inception.





CSEA Food Pantry & Community Gardening

With the rising cost of food in today's inflationary economy, food scarcity continues to be a serious concern for many Rhode Islanders. The problem is further exacerbated when community resources offering support do not offer the ethnic and cultural foods that are needed for Southeast Asian families. This year CSEA developed a community gardening program by acquiring a garden plot at the Southside Community Garden. CSEA's plot is across from Peace and Plenty Park, which is not far from our office building. This not only offers nutritious produce for the community but also offers an opportunity for individuals to engage with each other in healthy gardening activities and promotes self-sufficiency. Our elder community especially enjoys participating and sharing their heritage of agricultural skills.

50,000 pounds of food given to over 3000 families!

CSEA also continues to partner with RI Community Food Bank, West End Community Food Bank, and Franklin Farm to provide over 50,000 lbs. of culturally appropriate food, which often is unavailable at local food pantries. This year CSEA served 1520 clients that had urgent food needs through our partnership with the RI Food Bank. This culturally appropriate food is purchased at a local Asian grocery store - Bayon Market. This collaboration not only assisted those families in need but also supported a local Southeast Asian business thereby boosting Rhode Island's economy.



CSEA Leads the Way in Providing SNAP Outreach



CSEA is one of six organizations providing SNAP Outreach services throughout RI. Due to our proven track record as a leader, we are entering our fourth year of ensuring that families do not go hungry. CSEA staff is vitally important especially to those with limited language skills in understanding their eligibility, applying, and recertifying for food benefits. Over the past year CSEA has outreached 6929, helped more than 300 people apply, and assisted more than 1520 clients in SNAP related activities.

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), religious creed, disability, age, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.





Research Project Partnerships

CSEA has just completed its fourth year as a selected partner in the National All of Us Research Program, which seeks to enroll a million people throughout the US in a first-of-its-kind study that will provide longitudinal data to help researchers find better ways to develop precision medications and treatments tailored to address genetics, ethnicity, and environmental factors to prevent and cure diseases. Unfortunately, funding for this program has been severely cut. Despite this, due to our proven past results and strong partnership with AANHPI Engagement & Recruitment Core (ARC), CSEA was invited to apply for a reduced funding opportunity by ARC in September 2025. During this reporting period CSEA continued to inform the community about the benefits of the All of Us Research Project. In total, during this program year, We engaged approximately 1,800 Southeast Asian community members and supported 70 enrollments into All of Us.



Brown University

Southeast Asian Children's Dietary Study

Poor diet quality is a significant and critical problem for Southeast Asian (SEA) children whose families came to the US as refugees [e.g., Hmong, Cambodian, Laotian, Vietnamese]. SEA children are disproportionately burdened by higher rates of obesity and increased risk of other diet-related chronic diseases like type 2 diabetes relative to other Asian subgroups, Whites and other races. This study aims to engage 50 SEA families with children ages 6 to 11 to develop intervention strategies in family-based nutrition education, motivational interviewing, descriptive dietary norms messaging, and healthy eating financial incentive coupons to improve children's diet quality, body mass index and lower indicators of type 2 diabetes. During the last two years over the course of the study 94 families were screened and 43 families completed the program. We expect that study findings will be published over the next year.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN HEALTHY HABITS, HEALTHY KIDS (SEAHK)

HEALTHY EATING RESEARCH STUDY FOR SOUTHEAST ASIAN FAMILIES



School of
Public Health
BROWN UNIVERSITY



Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program & ITIN

Many Rhode Islanders find the process of filing their taxes challenging because of complex tax laws and changes in deduction amounts. For those with limited language skills and literacy, completing a tax return without assistance can be an impossible task. CSEA is open year around to help low-income taxpayers get their tax done at no cost. CSEA started this tax season on the 27th of January and prepared over 1000 federal tax returns and state tax returns. VITA program aligns with our nonprofit's mission to promote economic stability and equity by helping underserved communities access critical financial resources, including tax credits such as the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), Child Tax Credit (CTC), and Property Tax Credit, bringing back millions of dollars in the local economy by helping families retain their full refunds. Money that can be used to pay rent, bills, groceries, savings, or debt, directly boosting household stability. CSEA helped taxpayers get over one million dollars federal refunds, over half million RI state refunds, over two hundred thousand child child tax credit, over three hundred earn income credit, and over two hundred RI State only tax returns (for the renter's credit).

CSEA is also one of only two organizations in RI certified by the IRS to assist clients in filing their taxes under an ITIN. An Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) is a tax processing number issued by the Internal Revenue Service. The IRS issues ITINs to individuals who are required to have a U.S. taxpayer identification number but who do not have, and are not eligible to obtain, a Social Security number (SSN) from the Social Security Administration.

International Language Bank

One of the major strengths of CSEA is the language services we provide to the community we serve. CSEA provides language services in over 20 different languages, (90% of our staff are bilingual). Many individual clients would be unable to receive vital services without our help. Among other supports, we provide translation services for important client documentation. We currently have stationed 4 full time positions at the Pawtucket location covering populations who speaks Spanish, Portuguese, Creole (Cape Verde), and Haitian Creole, and 1 full time Spanish interpreter at the Woonsocket location. In addition to these requests, we also get steady weekly requests for home visits with DCYF, Child and Family for Early Intervention, school meeting for parents with English as second language, medical requests through NHP, and some courts requests. Our International Language Bank most requested languages are Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Creole, Khmer, Laotian, French and Mandarin with Spanish being the top language requested. The excellence of the services provided by International Language Bank has resulted in increased demand, (45% increase over the previous year). Revenue generated by the ILB supports all of the important programming offered at CSEA.

“Without CSEA’s interpreting services I would not be able to communicate with my doctors and understand my treatment needs.”



Anti Hate Programs

Sadly many people in our community are targets of prejudice, discrimination and violence. Educating the community in how to recognize these acts as crimes and how to report them to the proper authorities are important factors in reducing hateful acts in our society. CSEA secured funding from the Department of Justice for the next four years to work with other community based organizations to combat injustice and reduce the incidences of hate crimes in Rhode Island. Our efforts prioritized increasing awareness, distributing culturally responsive resources, and maintaining a visible and trusted presence within vulnerable communities. We provided in-person verbal guidance to Rhode Island residents with questions or concerns about their safety and rights and distributed materials to over 500 individuals.

CSEA also received funding from Asian Americans Advancing Justice (AAJC) to offer Anti-Asian Hate Training for communities impacted by Anti-Asian hate and harassment. This initiative allows CSEA staff to offer 10 training sessions in the community completed in Khmer, Laotian, and English. The training includes setting healthy limits, practicing resilience, assessing personal safety, and understanding the impact of harassment on the individual and community as a whole. Over the past two years of funding, CSEA has done 14 presentations to our community members and reached over 250 people.

Affordable Care Act (ACA)– Healthcare Navigation Program

Navigators serve an important role in connecting communities that historically have experienced lower access to health insurance coverage and greater disparities in negative health outcomes related to their lack of healthcare coverage. CSEA currently has 7 Navigators; adding 2 more Navigators in April of this year. We have navigators who speak different languages, Spanish, Portuguese, Khmer, Laotian, and Thai. From October of 2024 until September of 2025, the Navigators have served approximately 554 clients with various aspects of the application process including assistance in selecting an Affordable Healthcare Plan, mix household (Qualify Health Plan and Medicaid), Rite Care family (family with children under the age of 19 years old, Cover All Kids (Undocumented children), and older adult who age over 65 years and did not qualify for Medicare or Medicaid due to immigration status because they did not meet the five years bar. Open enrollment occurs November 1st through December 31st, which is our busiest period of the year. Additionally, our Navigators continue to support special enrollment circumstances for clients needing assistance throughout the year.

“CSEA is a place I trust. Without them I would know where to go for the help that I truly need. They connected me with programs, services, and resources that I didn’t even know existed.”



Community Engagement Events

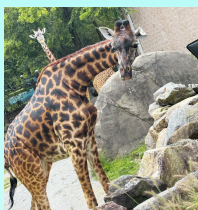
CSEA Health & Wellness Fair

CSEA held our annual Health Fair on 10/3/25. The community we serve looks forward to attending this event each year to learn about important information regarding health, nutrition, and the resources needed to help them live safe and healthy lives. Over 200 people attended and enjoyed cultural foods, music, and information on healthcare services, health insurance, utility/benefit assistance, and behavioral health services.



Elder Field Trip to the Zoo

Too often in our society elders feel isolated and lonely. This especially true for those with limited family, and linguistic and cultural barriers. With support from United Healthcare, we were able to offer our elders opportunities to engage with the community with special field trips and activities. On 9/10/25, 37 elders attended a field trip to Roger Williams Zoo. Most of the elders expressed that they had either never been to the zoo or had not visited for many decades since their children were young. They enjoyed learning about the animals and having a delicious luncheon buffet. This year we also organized holiday parties at the Center celebrating Halloween and Christmas festivities. These events create cherished opportunities for our elders to socialize with one another, engage in the community, and celebrate their culture and heritage.




United
Healthcare

Kids & Cops School Backpack & Toy Giveaway Events

Each year CSEA partners with the Rhode Island State Police and Cardi's to make sure children's holiday needs are met. During this reporting period, over 200 families who could not afford to buy holiday toys for their children due to high inflation were given toys. In addition as the new school year approached, many families could not afford school supplies due to the struggling economy. Thanks to our partnership with the RI State Police 275 backpacks and school supplies were also given to children in need!



Environmental Management

CSEA partners with the RI Division of Environmental Management (DEM) to offer The Hunters Feeding Hungry Program. This program allows the Division of Fish & Wildlife to join with RI hunters to provide food for impoverished citizens in the Southeast Asian community. The program gives hunters the opportunity to donate a portion of their harvested game to those less fortunate, helping to create good relations between hunters and the community. The program focuses on donation of deer but it has grown to include other donations such as birds and fish. The program is unique in that the CSEA will accept donations of legally tagged whole field dressed deer.

For this past hunting season, CSEA families received over 35 deer totaling almost 3,000 pounds of meat. The deer come from all over RI; some top towns where the deer are donated from are Block Island, East Greenwich, and Richmond. Donated deer can feed families for several weeks and over 100 families benefitted from this program. We also had donations of fish and duck which provided food for families in need.

CSEA’s Client Satisfaction Survey

·Number of respondents 87 indicate their response as “always”

I was treated with dignity and respect by CSEA staff	98%
Services were provided in a language that I understand.	96%
My cultural needs were honored and respected by CSEA staff	96%
CSEA staff helped me with the things I needed	97%
CSEA staff respected the decision I made about the services offered to me	97%
CSEA staff involved me in any decisions made about my participation in services	97%
CSEA staff respect my privacy and confidentiality	98%
I am satisfied with the services I receive at CSEA	98%
The facility at CSEA is clean and inviting	97%



Community Partners
To achieve our common goals, CSEA collaborates with its many Community Partners



270 Elmwood Avenue
Providence, RI 02907
Phone: 401-274-8811 | Fax: 401-274-8877
www.cseari.org